DAWN BOY

Blackfoot and Navajo Songs

BY

EDA LOU WALTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

WITTER BYNNER

THESE poetic interpretations of the Blackfoot and Navajo Songs are in spirit, the very essence of Indian symbolism, ritual, and worship of elemental beauty. The Blackfoot Songs are Miss Walton's "re-creations" of the Blackfoot myths, legends, folklore and dance songs; much of the Navajo material, however, is very close to the original Indian texts but without the usual tiresome refrains, repetitive and parallelistic lines characteristic of Indian verse.

The Navajo Ceremonial Songs form an important contribution to the collection—these are simple, direct and beautiful, expressing in poetic form the ever fresh religious inspiration of the tribe.

Mr. Witter Bynner, who himself has lived among the western Indians, says in his Introductory Note that Miss Walton is "a poet . . . well versed in her art and well attuned in her spirit" and "has brought into more congenial English than any other interpreter has found, the simplicities, the serenities, the grave and happy mysticism of Indian song."

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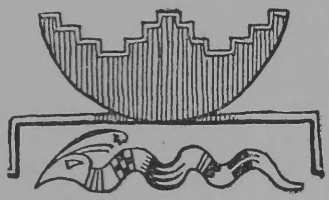
BLACKFOOT AND NAVAJO SONGS

BY

EDA LOU WALTON

With an Introduction by

WITTER BYNNER



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TO MY FATHER

WILLIAM BELL WALTON

AND

TO MY MOTHER

LEOLINE ASHENFELTER WALTON

PREFACE

I HAVE presented here the re-created songs of two Indian tribes: the Blackfoot and the Navajo. By "re-created" songs I mean not literal, not even free, translations of Indian texts, but rather interpretations of Indian poetic material. Indian song texts, as collected and translated by anthropologists,[1] fail, because of their repetition of idea, their oft-repeated refrains, and because of their obscure references to rite symbols, myths, legends, and customs, to hold much interest or æsthetic appeal for the English reader. For this reason, I believe that an effort to present in English

[1] Many of these interpretations are based on the texts of Washington Matthews (the greatest authority on the Navajo), collected by him during his twenty-year stay on the reservation.

verse, metrical or free, some high points of tribal folk-lore and song may lead to a truer understanding of the artistic value of Indian life and literature. This collection then is, in no sense, a contribution to anthropology; it is rather, I hope, a contribution to English verse which may well be enriched by the poetic expression of the American Indians.

The Blackfoot material is largely my own poetizing of Blackfoot myths, legends, folk-lore, and dance songs. Much of the Navajo material is, on the contrary, very close to the original Indian texts. I have left out tiresome refrains, repetitive, and parallelistic lines. I have shortened and compressed stanzas. I have frequently dropped out all but one of the sometimes twenty or thirty repetitive stanzas, or I have combined within one stanza the meaning of several. I have interpolated lines explanatory of obscure references. And yet, despite these various alterations, I have, I am sure, been closely true to the essence, the heart and

spirit of the Indian poetic conception. I have presented these poems simply and directly, without artificiality of diction, letting the beauty of the idea or symbol stand clean-cut. This method of presentation harmonizes best with the Indian texts.

These two groups of songs of semi-nomadic people are interesting in their difference. The Blackfoot songs are largely profane in origin (save for these concerned with the creation myth); the Navajo songs are sacred. Undoubtedly both tribes have both types of material in their compositions. The selection here is arbitrary.

The Blackfoot tribe lives on a reservation in Montana. Once hunters roaming over the prairies, they are now villagers working in the fields and at the "white man's" industries. Their former range was from about the headwaters of the Missouri River, from Yellowstone National Park to north Saskatchewan, and west to the Rockies. Now, however, their numbers are greatly reduced.

Only in their literature, their long legends and myths, their songs, do we get a glimpse of the old hunting life, of their primitive world-concepts and philosophies, of the ways in which they accounted for their surroundings and their existence. We find here brief and colorful nature-pictures, animal stories, and lyrical responses. The Blackfoot Indian has a delicious sense of humor. His myths and legends are full of dramatic surprises in which the tables are turned against famous hunters and leaders. His songs are often mere fun-poking at someone's expense. The Blackfoot faces life with zest, with a twinkle in his eye. He enjoys re-telling the old anecdotes, bold hunting tales, and the myths in which, because he is being "civilized," he is rapidly losing faith.

The Navajo, a southwestern tribe, live in New Mexico and Arizona on a reservation bounded by the San Juan (The Female Water) and the Rio Grande (The Male Water). They are a semi-nomadic tribe,

sheep-herders who eke out their existence by planting dwarf corn. Their houses, once made of skins, are now rude mud huts constructed, for most part, by the women who hold a very important place in tribal life, controlling the children and all of the property save the horses. The Navajo men are strong, well-built, athletic, of the old warrior type. The women are strong-chested, wiry, but not ungraceful.

All the lore and poetry of this tribe is in the keeping of the Navajo priesthood, a very distinct group, representing the gods and sometimes identified with them. This poetry is handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, and with accuracy, since the slightest mistake (even in a meaningless syllable) in the priestly singing of tribal song renders the rite it accompanies fruitless.

So fundamental is song in Navajo ceremonies that the priest or chanter, as he is always called, opens every rite with the phrase, "On the trail of the Singer of Song,

come!" a command to the god, the singer of song, to walk the trail of beauty, the pollen trail, and make known his blessings. The Navajo feel that only through the ecstasy of singing can contact with the holy ones be gained for any desired end. In the exaltation of ceremonial singing, the Navajo have, as a people, been able to feel the gods to be with them. The effect of one of their long ceremonies is that of a slow rise, day by day, and hour by hour, to a tremendous crisis in which, all night, the air is shattered by continuous long singing; then there is a drop suddenly into silence. With the daybreak comes absolute quiet; the catharsis of mental and spiritual excitement is enjoyed by each participant after he has stolen away to rest.

Because of their religious function we find expressed in Navajo song, lines of esoteric symbolism, tribal desire, and again, because there is ever fresh inspiration, the picturing of individual poetic experience, such as the sight of a white dove flying over

the desert. Thus in the content of song is seen the ever-present struggle between creative mysticism and ritual—most noticeable in this group of songs I present, a group almost entirely sacred.

Perhaps the struggle between mysticism and ritual is even more clearly discerned, however, in the form of Navajo songs. The tendency to swing like a pendulum from left to right, almost never circularly, in lines of repetition and parallelism is very definite. The unity of Navajo songs lies in the constant use of parallelistic lines; the variety, in the use of different types of parallelism. The parallel lines are long and, once the pattern has been set by the first poetic impulse, of little varied rhythm.

A typical Navajo stanza is built up block by block; it is not woven. One group of lines of a certain syllabic length falling into a certain parallelistic pattern, developing a certain idea by repeated predications of that idea, is followed by another group of lines similarly presented. Certain religious

formulæ often form the core of a stanza and set its rhythm and its stanzaic pattern. The final effect is like a Navajo blanket which has first, let us say, three black stripes; next, three rows of zigzag lightning and cloud figures; and next, three red stripes. In Navajo art the source of poetry is a natural mysticism, the source of pattern is ritual.

An understanding of the quiet simplicity and dignity of the life of these nature-people leads inevitably to a deeper understanding of Navajo song. People and song are one. The Navajo is a natural mystic who loves the orderliness of ritualization. Leading his nomadic life, he is in constant communion with nature's many moods. He worships the Sun-bearer, the Old Man who carries the moon, the Land-of-Horizontal-Yellow (the west) and the Land-of-Horizontal-Blue (the south). He is intensely religious, intensely aware of dwelling in a god-inhabited world. He attains his moment of god-contact through ritualistic

singing. All his nine-day ceremonies for healing and for rain and crops are accompanied by constant priestly singing. Through the power of song, gods are made to come down to earth and cure men. They walk the mountains, travel the rainbows, tread the fruitful trail of pollen. One touch of the sand in which their sacred bodies are pictured will cure a sufferer. The gods speak in thunder, in the chirping of grasshoppers. Their voices fructify the earth. Even the humanizing fact that the gods are fond of cigarettes does not lower them in the Indian's esteem. They live and have their being in the elemental fury of storms and the peace of the desert. They are the singers of song.

EDA LOU WALTON

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

FAMILIAR with various translations and interpretations of Indian song, and not much impressed by them, I encountered, seven years ago, some of these Navajo and Blackfoot poems as Miss Walton has recorded them; and through her sensitive echoing I became for the first time responsively aware of a poetry native long since to North America and still sung by its most seasoned inhabitants.

For three years now I have been living among the singers themselves, not the Blackfoot but the Pueblo and the Navajo. In plazas, on mesas, on plains, I have often been present at Tewa, Hopi, and Navajo ceremonials. On one occasion, remaining several days, I felt myself become an es-

tablished piece of earth, vibrant to the rhythm of their feet and voices. On another occasion, I watched a fellow-poet shed tears to their rhythm and heaven shed the prayed-for rain. Without understanding any words of the rhythm, I have been made sure of its intimate power and beauty.

From these experiences, and from such wording as Indian friends have made for me, my impression has ripened into conviction that Miss Walton, a poet not only bred in Indian terrain but well versed in her art and well attuned in her spirit, has brought into more congenial English than any other interpreter has found, the simplicities, the serenities, the grave and happy mysticism of Indian song. I use the word "happy" advisedly. Like the Chinese before them, our Indians have learned and sung, without a sentimental or fictitious acceptance, that sorrow is for some reason a part of the world's harmony, that we can not be wholly happy without being partly sad.

For the sake of the reader in English, I am glad that Miss Walton omits the patient repetitions which, however reverent and effective originally, can not enchant the eye as they do the ear. Unable to vary these repetitions with changes of firelight or with subtleties of gesture and drum, she has applied her magic to uses it can serve and, for me at least, has made Blackfoot and Navajo come alive in these pages and sing, through the surrounding clatter of Christendom, a music clean and true.

WITTER BYNNER.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO
November, 1925

WAKING SONG

(*Translated from a Navajo Ceremonial*)

Scatter your dawn pollen,
Dawn Boy,
For tonight
In your hoary age
You will have only
Twilight pollen
To spread forth upon the earth.

BLACKFOOT SONGS

OUT ON THE TRAIL

I SEE
Yellow buffalo,
I smell
The dust they blow
With nostrils red
Up from the powdered trail.
Fail me not now,
Good bow,
Good arrow go!

THE MARRIAGE DANCE

I WEAVE my blanket red,
I weave my blanket blue,
I weave my blanket all my life
Until I come to you.

I bring my blanket red,
I bring my blanket blue,
They are the story of the wife
The gray chief sold to you.

I spread my blanket red,
I spread my blanket blue,
I spread my blankets for your bed;
We belong now to you.

WEAPON SONG

LOOK, I make it beautiful,
This axe of mine,
I clip, I clip,
I shine, I shine.
This axe is very glad to be.
I am my axe
And make my axe me;
We melt together.

MAN SONG

TAIL feathers tie on me,
I am a man to-day!
No longer will I run with the women,
With men I'll stay.
Bright shall glow my tail feathers
When I dance this way——
(I wish I could see
Behind me.)
I am a man to-day!

WAR DANCE

THE earth is my home,
It is powerful.
Water speaks in foam,
It is powerful.
There sits a hill,
It is powerful.
I go now to kill,
I am powerful!

MEDICINE DANCE

THE wind is my medicine,
It blows away the stones
From my head.
The rain is my medicine,
It waters my weak bones
Stretched in bed.
My horse is my medicine
And when I ride
His beating energy
Thrills me inside.

DEER DANCE

I AM a deer,
Light-footedly I stamp.
Listen! I hear
Hunters from the camp.
Quick through the brush
Without a sound I go.
Hush!
They have found
My tracks in snow.

THE DUCK DANCE

ALL the ducks and prairie chickens
Nixat[1] said he'd teach to dance.
He made them circle in a hoop
To teach them how to dance.
"Now shut your eyes and dance," he said,
"And do not watch your feet."
This done, he broke their feathered necks
And took them home to eat.

[1] "Nixat" is the Blackfoot Creator. Cf. p. 27.

LOVE MEDICINE

A YELLOW dot on her forehead,
While she lies asleep in the sun,
A black dot over her beating heart,
And my charm is done, is done.
Tonight she will slip to my tipi
With wondering, half-breathed sigh.
She will part the painted curtains,
I shall watch her with half-shut eye.
The sacred charm will bind her,
Yet she will never know why.
And then if she pleases me not
I can wash my charm away
And laugh when I see her hiding
From my mocking eyes all day.

INDIAN LOVE SONG

WHY do I walk the white road alone,
Playing a lover's flute?
By the road I shall fall as a crumbling stone,
And shall wait there as mute.

I walk the white road to the blood-red moon,
Lifting my mourning cry,
She who was lost comes here to me soon;
I have willed that I die.

MOON-CHILD

INDIANS found you in the grass,
Moon-child,
They tossed you to me in the pass,
I hold you to my barren breast,
The Above, he sent you here for rest,
Moon-child!
But I have seen a white woman
Before my tipi creep,
She did not call or hail me,
She thought we were asleep,
But I have heard her cry for you,
I have seen her weep;
You are not mine, but hers, alas,
Moon-child!

RESTORING LIFE SONG

WE make Sun-wise movements—
Out from the Morning Sun
We call your breathing back to you,
In from the Evening Sun
Where the red light is done,
Down from the hot White Sun
Where the still noon hung blue,
We call your breathing back to you.

DEATH CRY

THE Above, he hears me.
The Below, he hears me.
You hear me not.
I cry, I call, I am alone.
Like clouds that blot
Sun-pictures from the pool
My cry, my mourning tone
Envelopes me;
Nothing is left,
The Above hears me no more
The Below is deaf!

BLACKFOOT LEGENDS

(In Verse)

HAWK-FACE'S HORSE

HAWK-FACE bought a pinto horse
To ride as was his habit,
He tied him up, then went away,
Returned and found his leather stay
Tied to an old jack-rabbit.

THE LOST STAR

A STAR fell out of the clouded sky
One night to the earth below,
And when he reached the earth he found
He was a buffalo.

HOW OUR FOREFATHER GOT HIS WIFE

OUR forefather once wished a wife,
A woman from another tribe
He knew that she would not marry him
Neither for love nor bribe,
So he changed into a yellow dog
And followed her up the trail.
She patted his head, and fed him deer
And stepped upon his tail.
He followed her out into the woods
Very far away,
There he changed into a man again
And carried her off like a sack of hay.

THE BLACK ROCK

THAT great Black Rock
Which hangs upon the hill,
That is our Grandfather,
We do his will.
And that dark cave off yonder,
Like a hollow bowl,
Our Grandfather fell down one day
And made that hole.

THUNDER'S WIVES

THUNDER had ten wives
To plow the sky in line,
He sold one for medicine,
Then there were nine.
Now when these nine wives quarrel
Thunder roars out loud
For them all to go back to work
And get those furrows plowed.

A DREAM

LAST night
I cried in my dream,
All night,
For it seems
Our Black-hawk forefather
Came to me and said,
"Now you are dead."
And then he threw his head
At me to hit—
But quick, my body
Dodged it!

THE STORY OF CREATION

FIRST there was water,
Water alone,
No mountain, no canyon, no tree,
No stone.
Then the Person sent for the Otter
And Duck,
And the bright-eyed Beaver
To bring him luck.
"Dive down to the bottom
Under the sea
And bring up some mud-dirt
Here to me,"
The Person said angrily
To these three.
Duck went in quickly,
Badly he choked,
The Otter sank headlong,
He was soaked.

The Beaver went down
Until He saw
A piece of red mud
Which he brought in his paw
To the Person who took it
In his hand,
Let it run through his fingers
Into mountains of sand.
That Person, who was he
That did this so?
Perhaps it was "Nixat,"
I don't know.

HOW NIXAT MADE THE OCEAN

NIXAT needed water to learn
How to wield a paddle stroke,
So he kicked, and kicked, and kicked
The ground until it broke.
Then the water came bubbling up so fast
That it covered all the sand,
The poor, Black Hawk flew around in the air
And begged for a place to land.
Nixat sitting in his floating canoe
Grew very, very tired of sitting still,
So he sent for the Otter and the Beaver and the Duck
To come and do his will.
They dammed the crack that Nixat made;
The water ran into the sea and stayed.

HOW NIXAT MADE ANIMALS

AFTER the mountains were made,
Nixat wished to hunt for bear,
But there were no animals yet,
Anywhere.
So Nixat took his pipe,
He sang three times,
He shouted three lines,
And he blew three puffs of smoke,
And after that he shook
His pipe until it broke.
Then all the animals fell out,
The Deer, the Turkey, the Wolf, the Bear,
Animals of earth, of sea, of air.

WHEN SUMMER WAS LOST

SUMMER was lost,
The ground was white,
Snow fell all day,
Wind blew all night,
Indians were cold.

Nixat came home
From the sheeted trail,
His black hair gleamed
With twinkling hail,
Nixat was bold.

"I'll find Summer," he said,
And went out to track
Wild buffalo herds
Through the snow.
He soon found the sack
Where Summer was tied

On a buffalo's back
Tangled up in its hair.
He tumbled her out
And the ground became bare,
No more snow.

THE QUEER BABY

A WOMAN had a baby,
But Coyote came one day
And ate that baby quickly up
As he ran around in play.
Then Coyote tied his woolly head
In the baby's blanket gray
And changed his nose a little,
Then down he lay, he lay.
The woman came and took him
Quickly to her tipi,
And rocked and rocked and rocked him
Until he grew sleepy.
That night her baby woke too soon
And went out howling at the moon.

NAVAJO INDIAN LEGENDS

(In Verse)

THE LIGHTS

THE Sun is a luminous shield
Borne up the blue path
By a god;
The Moon is the torch
Of an old man
Who stumbles over stars.

MAKING THE SKY

FIRST Woman patterned out the stars
To help the moon make light,
Patterned them neatly, patterned them right
Into star-lit animals against the night,
But old Coyote switched about in play
And scattered the stars as they are today.

WHEN THERE WERE NO ANTELOPE

WHEN there were no antelope,
Coyote lit his tail,
Ran in a wide circle,
Waving it like a sail.
The grass and trees caught fire,
Antelope ran out,
And at our feasts that winter
Deer-meat did not fail.

THE BATTLE OF EAGLES AND TUMBLEWEEDS

UP in a whirlwind
Charge the tumble-weeds
Straight at the ranks of eagles,
Into their eyes they shoot black seeds
And stickers into their feathers.
Down swoops an eagle
To a fire
And sets ablaze his tail,
Up he flies, higher, higher,
Scattering sparks like hail.
The tumble-weeds are all burnt dead,
And the smoking eagle goes home to bed.

SONG OF THE SUN BEARER

I GROW weary
So would you,
Of traveling over a path of blue,
But in the west she waits for me
Where my path runs down to the golden
sea.

Lit by rainbows,
Shaded by clouds,
Blowing wherever the west wind goes
Our house floats out on the golden sea
Where Estsanatlehi waits for me.

Estsanatlehi, Woman-Who-Changes,
Dances all day on the mountain ranges,
But when my path meets the golden sea
She is there to rest with me.

SUN BEARER'S WIFE

"WOMAN-WHO-CHANGES, come to me,"
Said the Bearer of the Sun,
Live with me near the golden sea
Where my road is run.
I have built you a house all beaded
With turquoise flecks of blue,
With haliotis, jet, and agate,
And white shell too.
Woman-Who-Changes came to him
And now at the end of day
He rests with her in the land of the West
Except when the storm clouds play,
Then in the East he lingers
Through the black and heated night
Sending out serpents of twisting
Mischievous, white light.

CHILD-RAIN

INTO the female pool again
Falls a drop of male-water
In impact giving birth
To Child-Rain.

THESE ARE INDEED MY CHILDREN

ROLLED in a robe of dawn,
In a robe of blue sky,
A robe of yellow evening light
And one of darkness,
We visited gods.
A god threw us
Against the white-shell spikes of east,
We bounded back unhurt.
Another tossed us south
Against sharp spikes of turquoise,
We bounded back, back too
From western haliotis blades
And the black-rock spikes of the north,
Yet unhurt,
Holding our life-feathers.
Then said the Chieftain-god
To the other gods,
"Depart from me, you divine weaklings,
These are indeed my children!"

NAVAJO GAMBLING SONGS

Navajo Gambling Songs

These songs are sung "for luck" during the Navajo gambling game played with a stone and a pair of moccasins. The stone is hidden by one side in one of the moccasins. The other side guesses where it is. The game was first played by the day and the night animals. Because the sun came up before it ended, neither side won, and consequently we still have both day and night.

DOVE SONG

RED Moccasin, little dove,
Pick up seeds,
Glossy Locks, little dove,
Pick up seeds,
It is spring, little dove.

MAGPIE SONG

IN the white of his wings
Are the footsteps of morning!

CHICKEN HAWK SONG

OLD Owl hates me,
Hates me, he hates me,
Because I always bring home rabbits,
Tender, flopping, white-tailed rabbits,
When he brings none.

GROUND SQUIRREL SONG

SQUIRREL struck me,
He struck me!
The titmice are angry
Because of it.
They put their quivers on.

WILD CAT SONG

LOOK at Wild Cat
One night
Coyote striped his thighs
With white.

Are his feet sore?
Are his feet sore?
Did he shut them in the door
Of his hogan?
Why does he walk as if the ground
Were wet?

DOVE SONG

TOWARD the white alkali flat
One white dove flies!

NAVAJO CEREMONIAL SONGS

COME ON THE TRAIL OF SONG

COME on the trail of song,
Leaving no footprints there,
Over the rainbow bridge
Down the mountain stair.

Come on the trail of song,
Gods of the Navajo,
Out of the sky-land
And the five worlds below.

THE CHANTER'S OATH OF TRUTH[1]

HORIZONTAL Woman, before you shame I have;
Above Darkness, before you shame I have;
Dawn, before you shame I have;
Horizontal-Land-Yellow, before you shame I have;
Horizontal-Land-Blue, before you shame I have;
Darkness, before you shame I have;
Sun Bearer, before you shame I have;
That within me standing, with me speaking, before you shame I have;
Always you are looking at me,
Never am I out of sight,

[1] This is the prayer (almost a literal translation) that an old priest offered to his gods, asking their forgiveness, before telling the "white man" some of the legends.

Therefore truth I tell,
Therefore truth I always tell
My word, to my breast I hold you!

SONG OF THE STRICKEN NAVAJO

WE have cried so long
That our cry has become song!

I, THE PRIEST

I, THE smiling chanter,
Priest of the Great Night Chant,
Come seeking you,
Dawn-Boy,
In the House of Horizontal White,
I walk the trail of morning
Seeking you.

I, the smiling chanter,
Priest of the Great Night Chant,
Shall seek you,
Old Man of Night,
In the House of Horizontal Black,
I shall walk the trail of twilight,
In old age seeking you.

VISION

I WALK with the gods;
Gods go before me,
Gods follow after me,
I walk in the middle.

WHITE HANDS

WHITE hands
Hovering like birds
I am calm as inland waters
To reflect you.

THE SOWER

I HOLD pollen of Dawn
In my hand,
With it I sow the night;
Over the mountain
Spring the first, pale blades
Of the new day.

MEDICINES

I GO in the early morning
Before the sun is up
To gather fever medicine,
White frost from a yucca cup.

I catch the blue bird singing
The last notes of his song
And pop him into your pollen
To make you strong.

I gather the four sweet waters
Of hail and river and snow
Mixed with the drop of the spring rock;
Clean from them you go.

And in the lightning flashes
I pluck blue ears of corn;
With sacred gruel I shall feed you
That you may be reborn.

IN THE MOONLIGHT

IN the moonlight
At the edge of black waters
Ghosts of White Corn
Sway,
Pointing fat fingers
Into the pool
Where the ghosts
Of their ghosts
Play.

WHERE MY KINDRED ARE

WHERE my kindred are, there I wander,
Child of White Corn, I,
Dwelling in the Red-Rock House,
The house of long life,
Of long, long happiness
With my kindred.
Beauty is before me,
Behind me is beauty,
In old age, with my kindred
I shall walk down
The beautiful trail.

THE VISIT OF A GOD

IT thunders!
He is thinking of you,
See he rises, coming toward you,
Now he approaches your house,
He enters your doorway,
Take down from your fireplace
His special dish and feed him,
That your body may become strong,
That he may enter into you.

SONG OF AN ALIEN GOD

WITH my blade of lightning
I reap your forests,
With the breath of my wrath
I loose the flood of your white waters.

SONG OF THE WAR-GODS

I AM the slayer of the Alien Gods,
The Sun arises with me
Journeys with me,
Goes down with me,
Abides with me always,
And never sees me.
I am the Child of Water,
The Moon arises with me,
Journeys with me,
Goes down with me,
Abides with me always,
And never sees me.

MAID-WHO-BECOMES-A-BEAR

MAID-WHO-BECOMES-A-BEAR,
Walks on the summits of blue mountains,
Far around.
Far spreads the land below,
It seems not far to her;
Dim spreads the land below,
It seems not dim to her.

VOICES THAT BEAUTIFY THE EARTH

VOICE above,
Voice of Thunder,
Speak from the dark of clouds;
Voice below,
Grasshopper-voice,
Speak from the green of plants;
So may the earth be beautiful.

SONG OF THE STRICKEN TWINS

FROM the white plain where stands the water,
We are come.
Bereft of eyes one leads the other,
Bereft of limbs one bears the other,
Down to the healing of tall grasses,
Seeking that we may recover,
Praying that we may discover,
Healing there.
From the white plain where stands the water
We are come.

DAYBREAK SONG

ALL night the gods were with us,
Now night is gone;
Silence the rattle,
Sing the daybreak song,
For in the dawn Bluebird calls,
With voice melodious, Bluebird calls,
And out from his blankets of tumbled gray
The Sun comes, combing his hair for the day.

BENEDICTORY CHANT

NOW Talking God,
With your feet I walk,
I walk with your limbs,
I carry forth your body,
For me your mind thinks,
Your voice speaks for me.
Beauty is before me
And beauty behind me,
Above and below me hovers the beautiful,
I am surrounded by it,
I am immersed in it.
In my youth I am aware of it,
And in old age
I shall walk quietly
The beautiful trail.

PRAYER FOR HARVEST

I ENTER into the House of the Red
Rock
Made holy by visiting gods,
And into the House of Blue Water
I am come.
Enter me, Spirit of my forgotten Grand-
mother,
That curtains of rain may hang
All dark before me,
That tall corn may shake itself
Above my head.

GIFTS OF THE GODS

THEY have given me of soft goods,
Good and beautiful skins and furs,
And of hard goods, beads and haliotis
shells,
Of many domestic animals
And of animals to hunt,
Corn of the rainbow color,
Black clouds, mists, male-rains
And the soft gray female-rain,
Lightning, plants, and pollen
For my voice, my limbs, my mind;
I am beautiful
In gratitude.

FINISHING HYMN

FROM the white alkali flat
The god takes up his sacrifice,
From pools in green meadows,
He drinks his offering.
Your body has become whole,
Your mind is renewed,
You are made beautiful again.

PRAYER AGAINST WITCHCRAFT

CHIEF-OF-WOMEN, Witch,
You who have my spirit body,
Possessed of half-moons from my nails,
Possessed of my fallen hair,
You have called it down to you,
For my spirit body follows
After any part of me.

Slayer of Alien-Gods
And Child of Waters,
You who are most potent,
Seek her out,
Procure from her those things of me
Binding my spirit body to her.
Bring it back to me,
Do not leave me a half-man!

OVER THE FLOWING WATER

OVER the flowing water
My thought wanders
To where my kindred dwell.
Broad is the flowing water
Between me and my kindred
And the land of my people
Is of earthly beauty.
Only in my old age,
In the broad, slow water of old age,
That flowing, flowing water,
Shall I know again
My people's welcome.

MOUNTAIN SONG

IN a holy place with a god I walk
Upon the summits.
I am old and have walked long with gods,
Soon I shall find the trail of beauty,
And with a god
Walk down into the valley.

THE ASCENSION OF THE NAVAJO PROPHET

I GO now from you forever,
My younger brother.
You will never see me again
But in summer
Watch for me in storm.
I shall speak from the he-rain
With voice of thunder.
Say to me then,
"Welcome, brother."
And in the early winter,
Listen for me at night,
For I shall speak to you
From the she-rain
With voice of mist.
Say to me,
"Welcome, brother!"
I go now from you forever,
But I shall be in every storm
That comes to you.

COMMUNION SUPPER OF THE NAVAJO GODS

LIFE pollen,
Mixed with healing waters
I feed to you,
Mask-of-a-god,
You stir, you stir,
You are awake!
Eat blue-bird pollen of his body,
My brothers,
From healing waters
Drink his spirit,
Breathe deep the eagles-down
Of his life-feather
And be lifted up to beauty!
We have eaten with you,
Mask-of-a-god,
You stir,
You wake from death
And go among men.

NAVAJO LULLABY

(Sung by the Priests and dancers to themselves after the long night vigil)

LULLABY, lullaby,
It is daybreak, lullaby.
Now comes the Daylight-Boy
Scattering pollen-dawn,
Now comes the Daylight-Girl
Bearing the flower of dawn;
It is daybreak, lullaby,
Lullaby, lullaby.

INDIAN DEATH

LAND of the Horizontal Yellow,
Walking I come to you,
In my old age I come to you
Searching for night.
Once I ran with Dawn-Boy
Down the land of Horizontal White;
He climbed the sky-road toward the West
And found his rest;
As he has done, so I do,
Land of the Horizontal Yellow
Walking I come to you.

INDIAN PRAYER AT EVENING

ONE sunset hour
Wrapped in sacrificial fire
Then I shall enter Thee,
Spirit of all sands,
And Thy night
Will cool my small desire
To be among my kinsmen.